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ABSTRACT

A survey of high school speech teachers revealed that the average speech teacher in selected schools has nine or fewer hours of academic credit in speech, does not read speech journals, may belong to a speech organization, and has less than seven years of teaching experience. This evidence shows a need for teacher workshops and summer institutes that provide: methods for teaching various forms of communication such as interpersonal, small group, and public speaking; instruction in integrative concepts such as communication and persuasion theory and group processes; planned programs of speech study that can be integrated into English courses; and good classroom materials such as textbooks, exercises, and demonstrations. Teacher training programs which offer instruction in these areas have demonstrated high attendance, especially when scheduled during the school year. Such supplementary teacher training should raise the level of speech communication instruction in high schools around the country. (CH)

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NON-DEBATE ACTIVITIES IN HIGH SCHOOL SUMMER SPEECH COMMUNICATION INSTITUTES

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Many people teaching speech in our public school systems are inadequately or minimally trained. Their training is weak, and their opportunities to receive further training are limited. In order to demonstrate these generalizations, we have selected four studies in addition to Mr. Weaver's own research. Each of these studies dealt with more features of speech education than teacher preparation, but they clearly showed this inadequacy.

In 1963, Gaye Carroll surveyed the white schools in Louisiana. She reported that 56% of those teachers responding to her questionnaire indicated that they had a major or minor in speech. Simple arithmetic shows us that 44% of the teachers had neither a major nor a minor in speech.[1]

Then, in 1965, Sharon Ratliffe and Deldee Herman surveyed the speech teachers in Michigan. They reported that 75% of the teachers had either a major or a minor in speech. At least 25% of the teachers were inadequately prepared to teach speech.[2]

Three years later, 1968, Mardel Ogilvie completed a survey in New York state. She reported that in schools with a student enrollment of over two thousand, 98.1% of the teachers were certified to teach speech. At the same time, in schools with 500 or fewer pupils only 46.8% of the teachers were certified. Overall, 68% of the teachers in high schools were certified teachers of speech. This meant that 32% of those people teaching speech were not certified to teach the subject.[3]

In 1970, Ronald Applbaum and Ellis Hays surveyed 70% of the high schools in California. They found that 49.3% of the teachers had a major in speech,

21.8% had a minor,[4] and 28.9% had neither a major nor a minor.

As revealed by these studies from four different geographical regions, the percentages of teachers inadequately prepared to teach speech were: 44% in Louisiana, 25% in Michigan, 32% in New York, and 29% in California. All of these percentages were arrived at using the teacher certification requirements of the individual states surveyed. The certification requirements for a major ranged from 18 semester hours in Louisiana to 36 semester hours in New York. If we assume that these studies are indicative of the teachers of the remaining states, then we do indeed have a great many teachers who need further training in speech principles and practices.

Weaver's study of North Carolina[5] revealed that only 21% of the teachers were certified to teach speech. Those not certified to teach speech were usually certified to teach English. Unfortunately for the students, 74% of the teachers had less than 9 hours of speech courses. Surprisingly, many of these teachers considered themselves prepared to teach speech. Sixteen percent of the teachers not certified considered themselves well-prepared to teach, and 50% considered themselves adequately prepared.

When the teachers were asked those areas in which they would prefer further training they selected oral interpretation, small group processes, and public address.

When asked if they used a textbook only 52% answered yes. Asked if they read or received speech journals and were members of a speech organization, 29% of the teachers replied that they read speech journals, and 26% that they were members of a speech organization.

A composite of the average speech teacher is a person with nine or fewer hours of academic credit in speech, who does not read speech journals, may belong to a speech organization, and has less than 7 years of teaching experience.

Based on the preceding evidence, we need teacher workshops directed toward non-speech-trained and minimally-speech-trained teachers. These workshops should provide: (1) instruction in how to teach various forms of communication such as interpersonal, small group, and public speaking; (2) instruction in integrative concepts like the communication process, persuasion theory, and group processes; (3) pre-planned programs of study for designated periods of time such as one week, six weeks, and nine weeks, to be integrated, mainly, into English courses; (4) classroom materials such as textbooks, exercises and demonstrations.

In order to get teachers to attend these workshops they must be made as attractive as possible. They should not be limited to the summer, but should be set up during the school year as well. Many teachers wish to reserve summers for time with their families, but are happy to attend workshops during the regular school year. Others not certified in speech will want to use some summers for studies to maintain certification in their major fields. In order to make the workshops more attractive, and to reward the teachers for their additional study, credit should be granted toward certification.

Experience in North Carolina suggests that teachers will attend workshops that are attractive and do meet their needs. Five one-day workshops operated in various parts of the state attracted a total during October and November 1972 of 116 participants from 70 different schools. The program for each one-day workshop, presented below, could be adapted to a longer period of study and could be used in a summer workshop as well.

A. Communication in the Classroom

1. Discussion of the classroom as a communication environment and the teaching/learning process as predominately a communication process.

2. Discussion of the importance of effective communication between teachers and pupils, including discussion of the effects of the role relationships involved and the causes and consequences of breakdowns in meaningful communication.

3. Discussion of the parallels between the learning process and the communication process.

B. Human Communication Process

1. Analysis of the process of communication by means of a model of the human communication process.

2. Emphasis on the attributes of communication sources and receivers as they operate in the classroom.

C. Introduction to Oral Communication and Forensics Units

1. Discussion of the kinds of goals, problems, and activities appropriate to short oral communication units in high school English, history, social studies, etc. classes.

2. Discussion of the kinds of activities appropriate to forensic units, both within classes and as extracurricular activities.

3. Discussion of the operation of and help available from the North Carolina High School Debating Union.

D. Oral Communication Activities

1. Brief discussion of the types and examples of oral communication activities appropriate and effective under the following labels:

   a. interpersonal communication
   b. small group discussion
   c. public speaking
   d. role playing and non-verbal mimicry
   e. oral interpretation and readers' theatre
   f. parliamentary procedure
   g. debate and forensic events

E. Forensics Activities (for forensics emphasis groups only)

1. Formal procedures and techniques of inter-high school debating, including suggestions for coaching.

2. Issues in the current national high school debate topic.

3. Competitive forensics events (extemporaneous speaking, oratory, oral reading).

F. Individual Planning and Questions and Answers.

1. Questions and answers about specific oral communication units and exercises

2. Individual planning for communication units or "mini-courses".

3. Questions and answers about organizing and funding forensic activities.

The "1972 Directory of Summer High School Speech Communication Institutes" indicated that only 8 of 23 teacher workshops offered instruction in one or more of the three areas of communication most desired by teachers in North Carolina -- oral interpretation, small group processes, and public address. The Speech Communication Association is sponsoring high school institutes at the University of Alabama, University of Denver, University of Wisconsin, and State University College at Brockport, New York. These institutes will offer such subjects as interpersonal communication, communication theory, small group processes, and oral interpretation. We applaud this joint activity of the SCA and host universities, and we urge its extension along the lines just recommended.

NOTES

1 Carroll, Gaye. "The Status of Speech in Louisiana," Southern Speech Journal, XXIX (Winter, 1963) pp. 150-155.

2 Ratliffe, Sharon A. and Herman, Deldee M. "The Status of Speech in High Schools of Michigan," Speech Teacher, XVIII, (January, 1969) pp. 45-49.

3 Ogilvie, Mardel. "The Status of Speech in Secondary Schools of New York State," Speech Teacher, XVIII, (January, 1969) pp. 39-44.

4 Applbaum, Ronald L. and Hays, Ellis R. "Speech Education in California Public High Schools: Implications for Teachers Preparation and Curriculum Trends," Western Speech, XXXV, (Winter, 1969) pp. 56-62.

5 Weaver, Robert E. "A Descriptive Study of Speech Education in the Secondary Schools of North Carolina." 1969, Unpublished Masters Thesis, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1972.

6 Barnes, Ted J. and Pence, James W., Initial Report on Oral Communication Workshops for High School Teachers, 1972. Unpublished report to the Assistant Superintendent of Public Instruction, State of North Carolina.